



# SIENA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

SIENA COLLEGE, LOUDONVILLE, NY

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## Siena College Poll:

### **Voters: 2011 Legislative Session Moves NYS on Right Track; Strong Plurality Says Albany has Become Less Dysfunctional New Yorkers Evenly Divided on DEC's Hydrofracking Recommendation *Cuomo Ratings Inch Higher, as Huge Majority Call 2016 Presidential Speculation Premature; Small Majority Oppose 'VP Cuomo' in 2012***

Loudonville, NY. Half of New York voters say that the recently completed 2011 legislative session has moved the state forward on the right track, compared to only nine percent who say the session moved New York in the wrong direction. Similarly, 48 percent say this year's session shows that state government has become less dysfunctional, compared to 18 percent who say it has become more dysfunctional, according to a new Siena College Research Institute poll of registered voters released today.

Voters are nearly evenly divided on the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) recommendation to allow hydrofracking in a large portion of the Marcellus Shale, even though a majority is more inclined to trust the arguments of opponents of hydrofracking rather than the arguments of supporters.

Governor Andrew Cuomo's favorability and job performance ratings inched higher this month, as voters give the Governor a better grade than they give either house of the Legislature for their effectiveness in the legislative session. While still negative, the favorability ratings for the Senate and Assembly rose significantly in the last month. More than four in five voters call Cuomo 2016 presidential speculation premature, with only 14 percent calling the speculation deserved. If President Obama decides to change running mates in his re-election run next year, 39 percent would support Obama choosing Cuomo, compared to 51 percent who oppose that idea.

"Many pundits and newspaper editorials have called the 2011 legislative session one of the most productive in years, and New Yorkers clearly agree," said Siena College pollster Steven Greenberg. "Fifty percent of voters – including a majority of Democrats, independents and voters from New York City, and a plurality of voters from upstate and the downstate suburbs – say the session moves the state forward in the right direction. Only nine percent say the session moves the state in the wrong direction, and 36 percent – including a plurality of Republicans – say that this session hasn't really changed New York's direction."

“For years, the word most often heard to describe state government generally and the Legislature specifically has been ‘dysfunctional.’ In voters’ minds, the Governor and Legislature took a step forward this year to change that,” Greenberg said. “Nearly half – including at least 45 percent of Democrats, Republicans and voters from every region – said this year’s session shows that state government has become less dysfunctional, while only 18 percent said it has become more dysfunctional and 28 percent said the level of dysfunction remains unchanged.”

**Strong Majorities of Voters See Property Tax Cap & Legislative Disclosure as Moving State Forward**

“More than two-thirds of voters – 68 percent – say the new property tax law moves the state forward on the right track, compared to only 15 percent who say it takes the state in the wrong direction. By an even larger 73-5 percent margin, voters say the new ethics disclosure law for legislators moves the state in the right direction,” Greenberg said. “The new law legalizing same sex marriages moves the state on the right track, according to 46 percent of voters, and takes the state in the wrong direction according to 28 percent.”

**Voters Divided on DEC’s Hydrofracking Recommendation; Majority Trust Hydrofracking Opponents**

“While only a little more than one-third of downstaters have paid a great deal or some attention to the debate over hydrofracking in the Marcellus Shale, nearly two-thirds of upstaters have been following the debate at least somewhat,” Greenberg said. “That regional difference doesn’t, however, carry over to voters’ attitudes on the DEC’s recommendation to allow hydrofracking, or on whether to trust hydrofracking supporters or opponents.”

Statewide, 45 percent of voters favor DEC’s recommendation and 43 percent oppose it. Upstate, 47 percent favor, 45 percent oppose; in the downstate suburbs, 47 percent favor, 40 percent oppose; and, 41 percent in New York City favor while 42 percent oppose. By a 54-33 percent margin, voters statewide say they are more inclined to trust hydrofracking opponents rather than supporters, a view held by 53 percent in New York City, 54 percent in the downstate suburbs and 55 percent upstate.

“Although significantly more voters are currently inclined to trust the arguments of hydrofracking opponents over those of supporters, the debate over whether or not hydrofracking should be permitted in New York has failed so far to produce a clear majority for either position – either statewide or upstate,” Greenberg said.

**Cuomo’s Favorability and Job Performance Ratings, Already High, Inch Even Higher**

Cuomo has a 71-21 percent favorability rating, up slightly from 68-21 percent last month. His job performance rating also rose slightly to 58-40 percent, up from 55-41 percent last month.

“Voters continue to have an overwhelmingly favorable view of Andrew Cuomo and a largely positive view of the job he is doing as Governor,” Greenberg said. “Only among conservative voters does Cuomo’s favorability drop below 60 percent, and even they give him a 59-35 percent favorability rating. Similarly, conservatives are the only group with a majority giving Cuomo a negative job performance rating.

“When asked to grade Cuomo’s effectiveness in his first legislative session, 62 percent of voters give him an ‘A’ (21 percent) or ‘B’ (41 percent), with 20 percent grading him ‘C,’ seven percent ‘D’ and six percent ‘F.’ Overall, voters give the Governor a grade point average – or GPA – of 2.67 or ‘B-’ for the session,” Greenberg said.

**Cuomo for President? Way Too Early. Obama’s Running Mate in 2012? Not So Much**

“Presidential speculation is nothing new for New York governors, however, voters think it is way too early to start printing Cuomo 2016 bumper stickers,” Greenberg said. “At least 80 percent of voters from every party and region say that the speculation is premature and he should focus on his responsibilities as governor.

“If the President wants a new VP running mate next year, a majority of New York voters say they hope he doesn’t choose Cuomo for the job. This view is held by a majority or plurality of voters from every party and region, interestingly, however, it is most opposed in New York City and least opposed upstate,” Greenberg said.

**Senate & Assembly See Boost in Favorability; Aren’t Graded as High as Cuomo on Session**

The State Senate is viewed favorably by 41 percent of voters and unfavorably by 49 percent (up from 30-56 percent last month). The Assembly has a 38-47 favorability rating (up from 26-56 percent). For each house, about a third of voters graded their session effectiveness as an ‘A’ or ‘B,’ about a third gave them a ‘C,’ and about a quarter graded them as ‘D’ or ‘F.’ The Senate’s GPA was 2.05 and the Assembly’s was 2.03, or ‘Cs’ for both.

“After this session, voters see state government as less dysfunctional and both houses of the Legislature enjoy considerably better – albeit still negative – favorability ratings. The Assembly saw a 21-point improvement in its favorability rating and the Senate improved by 18 points,” Greenberg said. “Who knows, another year like this one and voters might actually have a favorable view of one or both houses of the Legislature.”

**Obama Favorability Continues to Slowly Edge Lower; Job Performance Rating Falls Sharply**

“President Obama’s favorability has slipped to its lowest level since last December, 57-39 percent, down slightly from 59-38 percent last month,” Greenberg said. “Since May, however, his job performance rating fell from a positive 53-47 percent then to a now negative 45-55 percent rating. Still, however, a bare majority of New Yorkers say they are prepared to re-elect Obama next year, little changed from last month.”

**Voters Say State Headed on Right Track; Major Turnaround for Downstate Suburban & Upstate Voters**

“More voters, 48 percent, now think the New York State is headed on the right track than at any time since February 2007, while 40 percent believe the state is headed in the wrong direction,” Greenberg said. “This is a large turnaround since last month, particularly among downstate suburban and upstate voters.”

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This Siena College Poll was conducted July 6-11, 2011 by telephone calls to 813 New York State registered voters. It has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.4$  percentage points. Data was statistically adjusted by age, party, gender, and region to ensure representativeness. Sampling was conducted via random digit dialing to landline and cell phones weighted to reflect known population patterns. SRI, an independent, non-partisan research institute, subscribes to the American Association of Public Opinion Research Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. For more information, please call Steven Greenberg at 518-469-9858. Survey cross-tabulations and frequencies can be found at: [www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY](http://www.Siena.edu/SRI/SNY).



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## Siena College Poll Trends – July 2011

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Andrew Cuomo?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	71	21	8
June 2011	68	21	12
May 2011	71	20	9
April 2011	73	18	8
March 2011	69	20	11
February 2011	77	16	7
January 2011	70	17	13
December 2010	66	25	8
November 2010	64	26	9
October 31, 2010*	57	38	5
October 20, 2010*	62	34	3
October 5, 2010*	56	37	7
September 2010	60	31	9
August 2010	61	27	13
July 2010	62	25	13
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>77 (2/11)</b>	<b>42 (10/06)</b>	<b>24 (1/06, 2/06, 9/07)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>44 (8/06, 10/06)</b>	<b>14 (8/09)</b>	<b>3 (10/20/10)</b>

How would you rate the job that Andrew Cuomo is doing as Governor? Would you rate it excellent, good, fair, or poor?

DATE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	15	43	32	8	1
June 2011	11	44	32	9	5
May 2011	9	43	36	9	3
April 2011	11	43	34	7	4
March 2011	8	43	34	7	8
February 2011	10	47	29	4	10
January 2011	10	34	24	4	28
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>15 (7/11)</b>	<b>47 (2/11)</b>	<b>36 (5/11)</b>	<b>9 (6/11, 5/11)</b>	<b>28 (1/11)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>8 (3/11)</b>	<b>34 (1/11)</b>	<b>24 (1/11)</b>	<b>4 (2/11, 1/11)</b>	<b>1 (7/11)</b>

Based on what you've seen of him as Governor so far, would you describe Andrew Cuomo as a liberal, a moderate or a conservative?

DATE	LIBERAL	MODERATE	CONSERVATIVE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	35	50	8	8
May 2011	22	57	12	9
April 2011	18	57	15	10
March 2011	20	60	11	9
February 2011	21	57	15	7
January 2011	25	55	10	10
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>35 (7/11)</b>	<b>60 (3/11)</b>	<b>15 (4/11, 2/11)</b>	<b>10 (4/11, 1/11)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>21 (2/11)</b>	<b>50 (7/11)</b>	<b>8 (7/11)</b>	<b>7 (2/11)</b>

Governor Cuomo has said he is dedicated to improving the economy of New York, to making us the Empire State again. What grade would you give the governor on his efforts so far to improve the economy of New York? Would you give him a grade of A, B, C, D or F?

DATE	A	B	C	D	F	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	9	34	35	12	7	4
May 2011	9	35	37	8	6	5
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>9 (7&amp;5/11)</b>	<b>35 (5/11)</b>	<b>37 (5/11)</b>	<b>12 (7/11)</b>	<b>7 (7/11)</b>	<b>5 (5/11)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>9 (7&amp;5/11)</b>	<b>34 (7/11)</b>	<b>35 (7/11)</b>	<b>8 (5/11)</b>	<b>6 (5/11)</b>	<b>4 (7/11)</b>

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Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the New York State Assembly?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	38	47	15
June 2011	26	56	18
May 2011	32	54	14
March 2011	30	56	14
January 2011	29	57	14
July 2010	25	61	13
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>40 (2/09)</b>	<b>61 (7/10)</b>	<b>18 (6/11, 2/09)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>25 (7/10)</b>	<b>42 (2/09)</b>	<b>12 (1/10)</b>

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Sheldon Silver?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	22	36	41
April 2011	22	39	39
February 2011	19	41	39
December 2010	22	42	36
July 2010	20	40	41
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>28 (7/05)</b>	<b>42 (12/10)</b>	<b>50 (4/05)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>19 (2/11, 4/05)</b>	<b>30 (4/05)</b>	<b>36 (12/10, 6/09)</b>

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about the New York State Senate?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	41	49	10
June 2011	30	56	14
May 2011	33	56	12
March 2011	32	60	8
January 2011	33	56	11
July 2010	25	66	8
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>43 (2/09)</b>	<b>74 (7/09)</b>	<b>14 (6/11)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>20 (7/09)</b>	<b>43 (2/09)</b>	<b>6 (7/09)</b>

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Dean Skelos?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	13	20	67
April 2011	11	19	69
February 2011	11	17	71
December 2010	9	19	71
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>15 (6/09)</b>	<b>23 (6/09)</b>	<b>82 (11/08)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>9 (12/10)</b>	<b>8 (7/08)</b>	<b>62 (6/09)</b>

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Kirsten Gillibrand?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	49	21	30
May 2011	51	20	29
February 2011	57	18	25
November 2010	50	24	26
October 31, 2010*	52	34	14
October 20, 2010*	51	31	18
September 2010	43	26	30
August 2010	40	29	31
July 2010	34	29	37
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>57 (2/11)</b>	<b>34 (10/31/10)</b>	<b>56 (1/09)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>26 (3/09)</b>	<b>14 (1/09)</b>	<b>14 (10/31/10)</b>

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I know it's a ways off, but if Kirsten Gillibrand runs for re-election as United State Senator in 2012, would you vote to re-elect her or would you prefer someone else?

DATE	RE-ELECT	PREFER SOMEONE ELSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	50	29	21
May 2011	50	30	20
February 2011	52	29	19
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>52 (2/11)</b>	<b>30 (5/11)</b>	<b>21 (7/11)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>50 (7/11, 5/11)</b>	<b>29 (7/11, 2/11)</b>	<b>19 (2/11)</b>

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion about Barack Obama?

DATE	FAVORABLE	UNFAVORABLE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	57	39	4
June 2011	59	38	4
May 2011	62	36	2
April 2011	63	34	3
March 2011	60	37	3
February 2011	62	35	3
January 2011	61	36	3
December 2010	55	42	3
November 2010	58	37	5
October 31, 2010*	51	46	3
October 20, 2010*	56	41	3
September 2010	60	36	4
July 2010	60	37	3
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>81 (1/09)</b>	<b>46 (10/31/10)</b>	<b>40 (11/06)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>48 (11/06)</b>	<b>10 (1/09)</b>	<b>2 (5/11)</b>

How would you rate the job that Barack Obama is doing as President? Would you rate it excellent, good, fair, or poor?

DATE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	13	32	30	25	1
May 2011	16	37	24	23	0
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>16 (5/11)</b>	<b>37 (5/11)</b>	<b>30 (7/11)</b>	<b>25 (7/11)</b>	<b>1 (7/11)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>13 (7/11)</b>	<b>32 (7/11)</b>	<b>24 (5/11)</b>	<b>23 (5/11)</b>	<b>0 (5/11)</b>

Barack Obama is running for re-election as President in 2012. I know it's a ways off, but as things stand now, would you vote to re-elect him or would you prefer someone else?^

DATE	RE-ELECT	PREFER SOMEONE ELSE	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	50	41	9
June 2011	52	44	4
May 2011	54	39	6
April 2011	52	39	9
March 2011	49	43	8
February 2011	49	43	8
January 2011	50	40	10
December 2010	43	47	10
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>54 (5/11)</b>	<b>47 (12/10)</b>	<b>10 (1/11, 12/10)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>43 (12/10)</b>	<b>39 (5/11, 4/11)</b>	<b>4 (6/11)</b>

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Is the United States on the right track, or is it headed in the wrong direction?

DATE	RIGHT TRACK	WRONG DIRECTION	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	35	55	10
May 2011	43	49	9
March 2011	34	57	9
February 2011	44	47	9
January 2011	36	54	10
December 2010	30	59	11
November 2010	39	51	10
July 2010	41	52	8
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>62 (5/09)</b>	<b>69 (10/08)</b>	<b>17 (9/08)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>19 (10/08)</b>	<b>24 (12/09)</b>	<b>7 (5/09)</b>

How would you describe the fiscal condition of New York State right now? Would you describe it as excellent, good, fair, or poor?

DATE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	1	8	40	51	1
May 2011	0	9	33	57	1
April 2011	1	8	32	58	0
March 2011	1	7	30	62	1
February 2011	0	7	26	66	1
November 2010	0	7	27	65	1
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>1 (many)</b>	<b>14 (9/08)</b>	<b>43 (10/08)</b>	<b>67 (3/22/10)</b>	<b>4 (9/08)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>0 (many)</b>	<b>6 (3/22/10, etc.)</b>	<b>25 (3/22/10)</b>	<b>41 (9/08)</b>	<b>0 (4/11, etc.)</b>

Is New York State on the right track, or is it headed in the wrong direction?

DATE	RIGHT TRACK	WRONG DIRECTION	DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION
July 2011	48	40	12
June 2011	38	47	15
May 2011	40	49	11
April 2011	46	41	13
March 2011	43	45	12
February 2011	47	39	14
January 2011	36	50	14
December 2010	29	60	11
November 2010	32	54	15
October 31, 2010*	14	76	10
October 20, 2010*	14	75	12
October 5, 2010*	16	72	11
September 2010	21	68	11
August 2010	21	67	12
July 2010	20	71	9
<b>HIGHEST EVER</b>	<b>52 (11/06)</b>	<b>76 (10/31/10)</b>	<b>30 (1/07)</b>
<b>LOWEST EVER</b>	<b>14 (10/31 &amp; 20/10)</b>	<b>26 (1/07)</b>	<b>9 (7/10)</b>

**Poll Trend Notes:** \* All surveys are of registered voters except for the polls of October 2010, September and October 2008, and September and October 2006, which are polls of likely voters.

Trends reflect questions asked at least twice since the first Siena College Poll in February 2005.

Results listed here include all times questions have been asked since July 2010.

“Highest Ever” and “Lowest Ever” is provided at the bottom of each question.

^ Inconsequential wording change.